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Explanatory Memorandum](#)

AN BILLE UM THRÁTHNÓNTA NÍOS GILE, 2012
BRIGHTER EVENINGS BILL 2012

Mar a tionscnaíodh
As initiated

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

Section

1. Definitions.
 2. Report to be prepared on advancing the clocks.
 3. Three year trial period.
 4. Short title and collective citation.
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AN BILLE UM THRÁTHNÓNTA NÍOS GILE, 2012
BRIGHTER EVENINGS BILL 2012

BILL

entitled

5 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND
EQUALITY TO PREPARE AND PUBLISH A REPORT ON
THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF ADVANCING THE
CLOCKS BY ONE HOUR TO ALLOW FOR BRIGHTER
EVENINGS AND TO BRING IRELAND INTO THE CEN-
10 TRAL EUROPEAN TIME ZONE; TO ALSO ALLOW THE
MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY TO
ADVANCE THE CLOCKS BY ONE HOUR FOR A THREE
YEAR TRIAL PERIOD AND THEN PERMANENTLY IF
REQUIRED; AND FOR CONNECTED PURPOSES.

15 BE IT ENACTED BY THE OIREACHTAS AS FOLLOWS:

1.—(1) In this section—

Definitions.

“advancing the clocks in Ireland by one hour” means—

(a) during the period of summer time two hours in advance of
Greenwich Mean Time, and

20 (b) during winter time one hour in advance of Greenwich
Mean Time ensuring that Ireland would have brighter
evenings in line with the Central European Time Zone;

“daylight saving order” or “order” means an order that the Minister
may make to provide for advancing the clocks in Ireland by one
25 hour;

“Minister” means the Minister for Justice and Equality;

“report” means the report to be prepared by the Minister on the
costs and benefits for the Irish people of permanently moving the
clocks forward by an hour in line with Central European Time to
30 facilitate brighter evenings;

“trial period” means the three year time period wherein the clocks
would temporarily go forward by one hour in line with Central Euro-
pean Time to monitor the positive and negative effects of the time
change.

35 (2) Orders under this Act are to be made by statutory instrument.

Report to be prepared on advancing the clocks.

2.—(1) The Minister must prepare a report on all the potential costs and benefits of advancing the clocks in Ireland by one hour to bring it in line with the Central European Time Zone.

(2) In preparing the report the Minister must have regard to the different interests of persons in Northern Ireland.

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(3) The Minister must establish an independent group within his Department including stakeholders from the Economic and Social Research Institute; the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation; the Department of Health; the Department of Education and Skills; the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Met Éireann; the Road Safety Authority and all relevant non-Governmental organisations to oversee the preparation of the report.

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(4) The Minister must publish the report within 12 months of the Act being passed.

(5) The Minister must send a copy of the report as published to the Houses of the Oireachtas and to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

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Three year trial period.

3.—(1) The Minister may make provision for advancing the clocks in Ireland by one hour for a three year trial period under a daylight saving order.

(2) The order would facilitate a three year experiment in adopting the Single/Double Summer Time model wherein the first year the clocks would not go back in October but stay one-hour ahead until March when they would then be put forward by an hour. After this first adjustment clocks would continue to go back and forward as usual in autumn and spring in line with Central European Time.

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(3) Before being passed, a draft daylight saving order must be—

(a) laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas, and

(b) approved by a resolution of each House of the Oireachtas.

(4) The Minister must monitor the effect of a daylight saving order throughout the three year trial period.

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(5) At the end of the three year trial period the Minister must then decide whether to abandon the experiment or to permanently advance the clocks by one hour.

Short title and collective citation.

4.—This Act may be cited as the Brighter Evenings Act 2012.



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EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The aim of the Brighter Evenings Bill 2012 is to require the Minister for Justice and Equality to prepare and publish a report on the costs and benefits of advancing the clocks by one hour to allow for brighter evenings and to bring Ireland into the Central European Time zone.

In addition under this Bill, the Minister must then advance the clocks by one hour for a three year trial period (and then permanently if required). The three year experiment would adopt the Single/Double Summer Time (SDST) model wherein the first year the clocks would not go back in October. They would stay one-hour ahead until March when they would then be put forward by an hour. After this first adjustment clocks would continue to go back and forwards as usual. But they would then be an hour ahead of our current Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and GMT+1 system (i.e. to GMT+1 in winter and GMT+2 in summer) and bring Ireland into line with Central European Time.

Moving the clocks forward would make the evenings in the winter brighter for longer. In effect, we would spend more of our waking lives in the light rather than enduring the current long, bleak winter nights. Growing evidence highlights the wide benefits of brighter evenings. These include enhancing road safety and saving lives on the road every year; increasing jobs in the leisure and tourism industries; lowering energy bills by maximising available daylight and decreasing peak power demand; facilitating an improved quality of life with increased time available for exercise and sport in the evening, reduced crime and reduced fear of crime; and a decrease in CO₂ emissions. In fact, in the UK it has been estimated that lighter summer evenings could boost British tourism revenues by £3.5 billion per annum.

Historically, there have been strong arguments made by the agriculture sector against advancing the clocks permanently by one hour. The issue of children going to school in the mornings has also been raised in this regard. However, in both cases changing life and work patterns and technological advances have made the brighter evenings proposal more acceptable. A 2010 Scottish study, for example, argued that children in Scotland would gain as many as 200 “useful hours” a year if clocks were advanced permanently. In addition, in 2010 the National Farmers Union for Scotland dropped

its long standing opposition to any change to the current daylight saving time system and said it was prepared to examine the benefits to the UK as a whole that the proposed time change may bring.

Putting the clocks forward for good to ensure brighter evenings is back on the agenda. The UK has recently had one of its most serious debates in decades on changing the current operation of Daylight Saving Time.

A new Private Members Bill recently received significant cross-party support in the Houses of Westminster. The British “Lighter Later” organisation has also assembled a coalition of more than eighty groups from across the social, voluntary, community, sport, commercial and tourism sectors to campaign for a change in how clocks are set. This would mean the UK would operate under Central European Time which is the time zone for most of the European continent. Clearly, if our closest neighbour, the UK, decides to change its time system there would be a strong impetus to examine the current Irish time zone given the strong economic, social, cultural and family links between the two islands. However, there are important benefits for Ireland to consider putting the clocks forward that outweigh any moves by the UK in that direction.

*An Teachta Thomas P. Broughan,
Samhain, 2012.*